

Florida Gulf of Mexico Restoration
Project Submittal Form

Project Name:

Southwest Florida Regional Education Plan

Contact Information

Holly Greening, Director
Tampa Bay Estuary Program
hgreening@tbep.org
727-893-2765

Mark Alderson, Director
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program
mark@sbep.org
941-955-8085

Lisa Beever, Director
Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
lbeever@swfrpc.org
239-338-2556 ext 235

Project Location (include map, if possible, and the city, county, long/lat, and watershed)

The *Southwest Florida Regional Education Plan* includes 20 education projects to improve water quality, habitat and stewardship. The projects will be implemented 11 counties stretching from Levy County south to Collier County on Florida's west coast. Project locations are shown on Attachment 1. Information on the location of individual projects included in the *Southwest Florida Regional Education Plan* (with city/county, latitude and longitude) is included in the individual project descriptions from the Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan (SWFRERP) in the FDEP database. The projects will be coordinated among the entities to ensure continuity and regional applicability.

Project Description (describe all aspects of the project)

The *Southwest Florida Regional Education Plan* directly supports the State's Priority Area 2 (Community Resiliency), Priority area 3 (Water Quality) and Priority Area 5 (Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Mangement).

The *Southwest Florida Regional Education Plan* includes 9 3-Year priority projects and 11 10-year projects (Attachment 2). Projects include:

- Fertilizer education (water quality improvement and protection)
- Water and Habitat Conservation

- Stewardship
- Guides to natural and economic treasures
- Volunteerism in Gulf enhancement
- Sea level rise

Estimated Project Costs (describe the estimated costs of the project, including any assumptions for contingency and ongoing operations/maintenance. Identify other secured funding sources such as matching funds, in-kind contributions or state/federal dollars. In addition, if possible, complete and submit the Cost Appendix Sheet associated with this form):

Estimated needed total project costs for the 20 stormwater projects included in the *Southwest Florida Regional Education* is **\$20,273,848** (see page 31 of the SWFRERP). Individual project descriptions include estimates of matching funds and other contributions.

Of the 20 proposals, the SWFRERP identified 11 project priorities recommended for the first 3 years of the program. The requested amount of these projects in the first 3 years is \$4,734,798.

Other funding (indicate if the project is submitted for any potential funding or if it may be used to leverage additional funding, of so please describe the funding source (e.g. State/Federal Grants)).

Additional funding from grants, municipalities and other funding sources is shown in the individual project descriptions included in the FDEP database from the SWFRERP.

Technical feasibility (describe the technologies involved and any relevant past experience or proven success with similar projects):

Individual project descriptions include technical approach (see database descriptions). The education projects recommended in the 3 year plan gave priority to proven education projects and programs refined and adjusted over many years in Southwest Florida.

Environmental Benefits (Describe the nature, magnitude, and timing of any environmental benefits attributable to the project. If possible, describe potential environmental performance measures [e.g. pollutant reduction]. Please address any potential environmental impacts associated with implementing or maintaining the project [e.g., loss of a habitat or conversion of habitat from one type to another during implementation]).

Environmental benefits resulting from the *Southwest Florida Education Plan* include *improvement in Gulf and Estuary resources*. Individual project descriptions include descriptions of expected improvements in each watershed (see FDEP database for individual project descriptions).

Economic and Social Benefits (describe the economic and social benefits including those related to the project's improved ecosystem services and any estimates on jobs created or preserved).

Jobs created or preserved by the funding the 20 projects in the *Southwest Florida Education Plan* are estimated at 405 (using \$50,000 per employee). The 3 year priority list would create 95 jobs; while the 10 year list would create an estimated 310.

Implementation of this plan would improve recreational and educational experiences for adults and children while improving water quality and habitat.

Community Resilience (describe if the project assists Florida's ability to anticipate, withstand, or recover from hazards or threats [e.g. hurricane preparedness, establishing living shorelines]).

A number of the projects in the *Southwest Florida Educational Plan* include stewardship of valued community resources (see Attachment 2), enhancing Florida's ability to withstand hazards such as hurricanes and other tropical events..

Conflicts or Complements to Existing Efforts (describe any ongoing activities in the project implementation area, if the project is part of another plan, and why the project does or does not interfere with that work. Please consider how the project may complement existing local, regional, and state efforts/plans/objectives).

Educational projects in the *Southwest Florida Educational Plan* will occur within one or more of the National Estuary Program boundaries (see Map 5 of the SWFRERP, page 34) and assist in implementing the NEPs federally-approved Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans specified in the Restore Act as implementation mechanisms; environmental education is a focal point of the three federal approved management plans. The two Water Management Districts develop Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plans, of which many of the projects would assist in implementing. In addition, all of these projects are elements of the Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan, adopted on March 8, 2013.

Complies with Federal, State, Local and Tribal Laws/Regulations (describe any concerns or potential conflicts).

No concerns have been noted.

Readiness for Implementation (describe if the project has had any design or permitting work started or completed [attach permits or design work]. Please address any issues that may delay start or finish of the project).

The projects proposed in the *Southwest Florida Educational Plan* could be implemented quickly and do not require permits as of July 2012. After rules are provided by the Treasury Department regarding RESTORE Act funding, more will be understood regarding definitions of 'previously authorized projects'. At that point, the southwest Florida NEPs can assist the State in identifying such projects within the *Southwest Florida Regional Education Plan*.

Public Acceptance (describe any known or potential public approval or opposition to the project).

All projects contained in the SWFRERP, including the 20 included in this *Southwest Florida Education Plan*, were reviewed and ranked through publicly-noticed meetings of a Work Group (January 28-29 and February 11, 2013), followed by a Joint NEP Management Board on Feb 20, 2013. The Joint NEP Policy Board, consisting of 39 elected officials, Water Management Governing Board members, and agency leads (listed on page 8 of the SWFRERP) approved the process and resulting plan on March 8, 2013. All meetings were noticed (1) in the Florida Administrative Register; (2) through direct notice to the three National Estuary Program Board members and all applicants; and (3) on the websites of the three NEPs.

Additional Information you may wish to provide (Please include any maps, designs, drawings, photos, or background resources that may assist in completely and accurately understanding the project):

Two documents are attached:

- Attachment 1: Map showing locations of the 56 projects comprising the *Southwest Stormwater Improvement Plan*, including 3-Year and 10-Year projects.
- Attachment 2: A listing of the 56 projects included in the *Southwest Florida Coastal Habitat Restoration Plan* and the habitat restoration benefits provided by each project.

The Southwest Florida Regional Ecosystem Restoration Plan (SWFRERP), approved by the Joint NEP Policy Board members on March 8, 2013 has been previously provided to FDEP.